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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SIGNS HISTORIC FIRST NATIONS HOUSING MOU

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Vancouver (May 21, 2008) - The Government of Canada today signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province of B.C. and the First Nations Leadership Council, agreeing to work together to develop a comprehensive approach to improve housing for First Nations communities, individuals and families both on and off reserve.

Minister Strahl at the signing of an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province of B.C. and the First Nations Leadership Council, agreeing to work together to develop a comprehensive approach to improve housing for First Nations communities, individuals and families both on and off reserve.

"Our Government's goal is to provide First Nations with the same housing opportunities as other Canadians," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. "This MOU is the first step in establishing key partnerships and setting out the initial framework to explore innovative approaches to improve access to quality housing."

This agreement will acknowledge that working in partnership is necessary to overcome barriers and to address the housing gap between First Nations people and other British Columbians. It will also commit to exploring innovative approaches to improve housing and infrastructure for First Nations, individuals and families, and set out an initial framework for the collaborative development of interlinked on and off reserve housing strategies.

"The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of housing in improving the lives of all individuals and families," said the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "This MOU demonstrates our commitment to develop effective housing solutions for First Nations in British Columbia."

A committee representing all three parties to the MOU will be formed within three months to collaboratively develop a plan for interlinked on and off reserve housing strategies in support of First Nations individuals and families. The Government of Canada, Province of B.C. and First Nations Leadership Council will then meet annually to discuss progress in implementing the MOU.

The Government of Canada, through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, delivers housing programs for First Nations living on reserve while the province supports First Nation housing off reserve.

Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding are: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; the Province of B.C.; First Nations Summit; B.C. Assembly of First Nations; and, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.

Memorandum of Understanding

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